

The Bare Facts

Chronic telogen effluvium is a recently recognised condition that affects women starting in their thirties.

There is constant hair loss, however most outside observers do not notice anything abnormal.

It can continue for a long time, but does eventually stop.

It is not related to hormones, and is different to common baldness.

There is no known effective treatment, but minoxidil [Regaine] lotion can be tried for three months.

Where To Look for Help

Your Local Doctor should be the first person you see. He or she will be able to advise you on the appropriate medications to use or specialist to see.

Be sure to check any new treatments you are about to use with your doctor. There are many bogus treatments out there, most of them are expensive but relatively harmless.

Our website also has other information.

www alopecia.com.au.

Understanding

Chronic Telogen
Effluvium

The Australasian Hair and Wool Research Society
Department of Dermatology
St. Vincent's Hospital
41 Victoria Parade
Fitzroy VIC 3065

The Skin and Cancer Foundation (VIC)
95 Rathdowne Street
Carlton VIC 3053



CHRONIC TELOGEN EFFLUVIUM is a newly recognised condition. The features of chronic telogen effluvium are that women, often in their 30's start to notice an abrupt increase in the amount of hair that they shed each day. The hairs that are shed usually have a white bulb and a many as 100 hairs can be lost each day. The onset is usually sudden and the hair shedding is noticed whenever they brush, comb or wash their hair. The hairs may even block the shower drain. Whilst the actual amount of hair that comes out each day fluctuates there is a notable increase. Chronic telogen effluvium seems to particularly effect those women who had a very full head of hair prior to the onset of the condition. In addition, these women were often able to keep their hair very long and often longer than other women.

Chronic telogen effluvium can last for years before it ultimately stops. Even though hair shedding is continued for a number of

years, the hair loss is only noticeable to themselves and persons very close to them. Sometimes even their hairdressers are not aware of any hair loss. Women often notice that the volume of hair in their ponytail is dramatically decreased and may only be 30-50% of normal.

In spite of the fact that the shedding can go on for months or even years, when it finally does stop, as it always does, the patient will still have a normal head of hair to the outside observer. Usually it is only the patient who notices that the hair is less bulky than before and, of course, this will also be shown up in comparison with photographs taken before the hair loss began. There are a number of triggers for this hair loss which include

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Iron Deficiency Anaemia, childbirth, major illness, crash diet, starting or stopping certain medications or even major life-stress. Nevertheless, for most women, no cause is identified.

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It is important to have some blood tests, including iron studies and thyroid function tests, done and have medications reviewed. If all of these are normal then a biopsy from the scalp may be required to distinguish chronic telogen effluvium from common baldness, which can also affect women. The biopsy may need to be repeated every year or two to ensure that there has been no transition.

Chronic telogen effluvium is **not** caused by hormones and is distinguished from common baldness. It does not respond to hormonal treatments and it does not progress to baldness. There is no known effective treatment for this condition although topical minoxidil can be tried for a three month period and this may sometimes stop the hair shedding.